

Silicon Valley... There are certain images that come to mind when someone thinks of this place. Giant tech companies, big fortunes, smart people... However, there was one guy in Silicon Valley that didn't match these criteria. He was a professional football coach who swore like a sailor and acted informally in the formal contexts.

The man himself was Bill Campbell... He was an off the chart business mentor that had affected the future of start-ups like Apple and Google which became multi-billion dollar companies today. He was not only a mentor but also was a friend of important people like Steve Jobs from Apple and Eric Schmidt from Google company. Until the time of his death in 2016, his ideas and leadership skills made him one of the world's most important business acumen.

In a couple of decades, Campbell achieved those amazing results. Also, the most important thing that made the difference between Bill and other mentors is that he never forgot where he came and how did he survive bad situations as a college football coach. This summary will tell you more about a Silicon Valley legend, with the help of 100 interviews with the people who admired and supported him.

Campbell came to Silicon Valley from the football fields.

Generally, important people in Silicon Valley are the intelligent guys who dropped school and start an enterprise from their old garages before their adulthood ages. However, not all the innovators in the Valley started their career when they were young. As a matter of fact, one of the greatest pioneers of "South Bay" came to the Valley when he was about to be 40.

Campbell was born and raised in Homestead, Pennsylvania in 1940, as a son of a local school official who was also working at the local mill. He was so bright and ambitious that he had already had ideas about what to do in his life. When he was a teenager, his name was on the school newspaper as an example student to his peers to show the importance of studying hard and getting good grades, instead of loafing around.

However, what he wanted was not an academic career, he wanted to build up his career in football. He got into Columbia University to study Economics in 1958 and he joined the college football team - The Lions on his first year. His qualifications were not adequate to be a successful footballer: he was weighing 75 kilograms and standing 178 cm.

Everyone was under the impression that he would fail soon enough and leave the team. Since he was the smallest member of the team, no one was hopeful about him, but he surprised everyone. He was the bravest and the most willing player on the field. Then, he earned the nickname, which he deserved, 'Ballsy' that means "determined and courageous".

When he was the captain of the team, the Lions became the Ivy League Champion in 1961. Since then, the team never repeated their success. On becoming the champion of the Ivy League, Campbell tried and did his best, that's why he is shown as a great example.

When he was graduated, Boston College offered him to be their assistant football coach. He accepted the offer and moved to Boston. In the 10 years, he showed his high abilities that made everyone realize that he would make a great coach. In light of that, other universities started to send offers to him. He turned away all the great opportunities to work with his alma mater.

Turning away better offers was not really a rational move for his career. Yet, he listened to his heart and returned to Columbia in 1974. When he started his job, he realized that the university's football facilities were not in good shape. Moreover, the university wasn't funding the football team enough.

During Campbell was the coach of the Columbia, the Lions lost 41 games and won only 12 games. Eventually, in 1978, Rutgers humiliated Columbia with 69-0 points at Giants Stadium. That was the end of Campbell's career as a football coach. He resigned in 1979 and continued his career in a different area.

Bill entered the business world when he moved to Golden State.

At the age of 39, Campbell ended his football career and entered the business world. Firstly, he worked with J. Walter Thompson in an advertising agency. Even though he didn't know the business, he showed the same determination and ambition in his work. Thanks to his achievements clients loved him, especially Kodak was so impressed that they hired him.

His job at Kodak made things better for him because he was a rookie in his new career and he was improving himself day by day.

In 1983, there was an unexpected offer from an old friend from Columbia. It was John Sculley, he wanted him to take a job under him and Steve Jobs in Apple Company. It was risky because at the time Kodak was bigger and stronger than Apple. Despite all the negative sides, Bill Campbell accepted to work under John Sculley. His mother thought he was crazy for leaving Kodak.

His position in Apple was not high. However, he believed that he would get higher positions as he could. Since he didn't have a background in tech area he thought that he wouldn't get more senior positions. Nevertheless, things went smoothly, and he had a great workplace that benefited his personality and career.

Nine months later, Bill became the vice president of sales and worked for the launch of Apple's new computer, the Macintosh. When he was in that position, he made one of the brilliant decisions in Apple's history.

For the Super Bowl in 1984, Apple bought an advertising spot. Campbell's team brought forward an ad that was related to George Orwell's novel 1984. In the advertisement, a young woman runs from guards with a sledgehammer on her hand. She bursts into a chamber filled with grey-uniformed men watching a dictator-like man on a large screen. She tosses the sledgehammer to the screen and it explodes. Then, the narrator tells: "1984 won't be like 1984."

Although Steve Jobs loved it, Apple's board opposed the advertisement by saying it was too polemical. That's why they tried to give up, but for the last decision, they asked Bill Campbell. By taking all the risks, he said that everything should go on as it was. Then, it was broadcasted and became one of the most famous ads of all time.

Bill left Apple and set himself on the way to mentoring.

Around 1990, Bill was working on a spin-off software venture called Claris. Even though everything was going well, Apple was decisive about making it non-public. Bill and Apple were in conflict on this issue. If it weren't for this solid decision, Bill would stay in the

company as a software manufacturer. But, after it all went down, Bill decided to leave Apple and start a new career.

Surprisingly, in his new career, his first client was Apple. We already know that his loyalty to his past led him to be the coach of the Lions. So, his loyalty led him again.

In 1985, Steve Jobs was forced out of business and Bill was one of the outstanding team members to said that the company without Steve Jobs would struggle. Jobs never forgot Bill's standing for him. In 1997, after he was reinstated as Apple's CEO, he made Bill one of the directors of the company.

Jobs and Campbell did not just colleagues, but also they were friends. Whenever Steve had a problem, he would call Bill to get a piece of advice. Year after year, Bill worked and helped Jobs to rescue the company from bankrupting and they beat a path for Apple to become a multi-billion dollar company.

Campbell and Jobs used to do Sunday afternoon walk around their neighborhood. People started to talk about their walks and saw Bill as the mentor of Steve Jobs. In 2001, Eric Schmidt, who was a software engineer and the CEO of Google at that time, learned about their relationship and wanted to get help from Campbell. However, he wasn't sure how an ex-football coach would help him with software related situations.

Bill easily changed Eric's skeptical ideas about him. At the first meeting, they got along well with each other. During the next decade, Eric Schmidt and Steve Jobs in particularly, leaders from Google and Apple consulted Bill just about every week. With the help of the consultations and the hard work of the employees, Google's worth became billions of dollars.

True leaders care about the core values of their companies and remind them to others.

Bill started working for Google in 2001 when the company was not in a stable condition. Because of the managers intervene in creative products, Co-founder Larry Page decided to part ways with all managers.

At first, Larry's decision seemed to be working, however, Bill was not on the same wavelength. Bill wanted to solve the issue and suggested: "At the end of the project we should ask the real heroes of the action – Google's engineers about what they think."

They all agreed on Bill's suggestions and managers are appointed again. Because, people wanted leaders to work in an organized environment, and to solve their problems easily and quickly.

Even though flat organizations, where there are fewer supervisors, seems to provide a better workplace, hierarchical organizations showed that they are better in different ways. American Journal conducted a study in 2005 to show the difference between flat and hierarchical organizations in sociological perspective.

The results were obvious, flat organizations were weaker in applying the innovations than hierarchical organizations. Google had lots of innovative projects and launching them was not easy, which means someone had to make tough decisions to have clear sailing.

Nevertheless, fully autocratic administration was not the answer. It was better but still didn't meet the expectations. At the end of the day, autocracy makes the administrator the one that scares and drives away the employees. So, what would be the solution to this issue? Bill Campbell had the answer.

In the case of not reaching an agreement or a complicated situation, a leader should evoke everyone about the company's core values which are the defining elements of its mission and purpose. He learned how a leader should act in those kinds of situations when he was working with Tellme Networks in the 1990s.

Tellme Networks developed a speech recognition software which was cloud-based. It was the first in its field. However, the company was in a jam. Seeing the situation, widely known telecommunication company AT&T offered to buy the software license for tens of millions. It would save the company, but there was one condition, that is: Tellme had to exit the market.

Half the board of Tellme Network was in favor of taking the deal. Bill didn't think it was a good deal and he might have lost his team because of his contradiction. That's why he

invited Tellme's founder Mike Mccue to take a walk and talk about the core values of the company.

Bill mentioned that the software they developed was not only the first but also the best product in business. Also, he added that AT&T would save the company, but it would cost them their one and only product. He asked why Mike found the company in the first place. After this conversation, Mike made up his mind and gave a speech about the core values of the company to the board. In the light of his speech, AT&T offer was rejected.

A great leader doesn't avoid showing his feelings.

In the business, there is a stereotype type that if a person shows his/her emotions in the workplace, that person is seen as a weak worker than the ones that don't show their emotions. However, it is not always true. The best proof for this was Bill Campbell.

Bill was a sincere and friendly person. He was not a typical leader in terms of personal warmth. Even in the formal meetings he would change the atmosphere and lighten the mood. In the workplace, he was famous for his hugs, sincere way of talking, and blowing kisses to his colleagues...

Moreover, he was a really helpful leader. When someone is in trouble, he would drop everything and help that person right away. Even if he can't do anything materially, he would help morally. For instance, when Steve Jobs was taken to the hospital because of cancer, Bill went to see him in the hospital every day.

It wasn't just because he and Jobs get along well, he would do the same for the people he worked with. It shows that he cares about the people around him at the workplace, which also is a sign of an effective leader.

In 2014, HR experts Sigal Barsade and Olivia O'Neill conduct a study about leadership. Accordingly, if the leaders show companionate love to everyone in the workplace, not only employees have higher rates of contentedness and a better level of performances but also their absenteeism rate decreases. The reason behind is that positive relations between leaders and workers break the barriers.

People are scared to show their emotions at workplaces. In fact, it is not scary that much. No one has to be as sincere as Bill Campbell. Still, there are lots of different ways to create a warm environment.

For example, when Bill was a director at Apple, he especially wanted the board to respond to the presentations they like actively. When the board like a presentation, they stood up and clapped the presenter. According to Phil Schiller, who worked for Apple, those scenes were like proud parents appreciating their child by clapping.

His colleague from Claris, Bruce Chizen shared his moments with Bill Campbell. He said that Campbell was always easy-going while talking to other employees in the company. Bruce Chizen was not like Bill Campbell in terms of intimacy, but he tried and realized that it wasn't as hard as he thought it would be. Simply remembering the names of others and asking them about their day was enough to create a more intimate environment.

Segregation might keep you from discovering a real talent, that's why prejudice is never good for anyone.

In the 1980s, when the time of segregation was at the peak, most of the directors in Silicon Valley were men. Only a few women were in the senior positions, one of them was Deb Biondolillo who was the HR Director of Apple in the US.

At the company's weekly staff meetings, Bill realized one thing and made a move. Deb had always sat at the back of the room even though she had a senior title. One day, Bill asked her to come to the table rather than sitting at the back of the room. While waiting, one of the bad-tempered executives saw her on the table and he found it strange. Then he saw Bill and found out that he made the call. At that moment, she realized that things would work out.

Bill's methods were unusual to everyone in the company. But somehow he was trusted. Most probably his achievements as a football coach made them trust him. He was great at finding the best players for the team, no matter who they are. As for the company, he brought plenty of women to the boardroom table. Because he thought that they were no different from men.

There was a study that was conducted in 2010 by the journal Science that proves Bill's methods are true. Authors asked that why there are smarter groups than others. First of all, they found that everyone participates in the higher IQ groups, rather than having one speaker. Secondly, emotional intelligence was higher in higher IQ groups. And, lastly, there were more women in the higher IQ groups.

However, there are still unequal conditions in the tech world. Women should have equal representation in the business. 2016 US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission stated that only the 1/5 of tech executives were women. According to 2018 Entelo Women in Tech report this rate was 1/10.

Bill was thinking about mentoring programs to raise awareness of equality in the business. Risk management software company MetricStream's CEO Shellye Archambeau created a senior women executives group to assist and support each other. When Bill learned about the group, he wanted to attend the meetings and get an idea from it by listening to them and asking questions to them. The group idea was working very well and he developed more and used it in the company.

Trust is the cornerstone of the boardroom.

You have just read about how Deb Biondolillo gained a place in the table with the help of Bill Campbell. He both persuaded Deb and bad-tempered executive Al Eisenstat. But how? The answer is here: They trust Bill Campbell.

In 1998, the journal Academy of Management Review published an article that showed the importance of trust. Accordingly, if you are willing to take a chance because of the positive expectations from someone, it means that you trust that person. And taking chances and trust are what sustain the boardrooms.

For instance, when Bill was working with the software company Intuit, there was a divergence in the board. One side said that recent losses should be written and the company should focus on long-term growth. The other side, which was Bill's, supported the idea that if they tolerate short-term failures, there wouldn't be long-term growth. Upon that, Head of Sales John Doerr said that they should be on Bill's side and they agreed unanimously. Since he had gained their trust in the first place, a problem easily solved.

How did he gain their trust? First of all, he was a great listener. He was different from the other executives, he wouldn't act carelessly. In contrast, he would give his full attention to what people were saying. Moreover, he wouldn't just listen, he would also ask questions to show that he really cared.

According to the Harvard Business Review paper in 2016, this method is used by all great listeners. People who use these methods are seen as, the most honest, guider and trustworthy people. Therefore, when people talk with these people, they easily feel the intimacy and trust them.

Trust is great at solving problems in the boardrooms. What about in other contexts? It also creates a positive atmosphere in the case of a disagreement. When there is no trust, there is no emotion, which can make you get in the way of objectivity and if someone criticizes you, it might hurt morally. Once that happens, your insights might become negative for your speech partner.

When you take chance and trust people, it is important to concentrate on the issues at hand, instead of taking things personally. Authors worked in a company that was shaped by Bill's methods. Their own experience in the company made them realize that the best answers come from honesty.

Trillion Dollar Coach by Eric Schmidt, Jonathan Rosenberg, Alan Eagle Book Review

Campbell was a former football coach that had been living in a modest life and didn't have any knowledge of the tech. Then, tables turned for him and he found himself in the Golden State at the age of 43. It was obvious that he didn't belong there, but he adapted himself so good that lots of people thought he had a very rich background in the tech business

He helped plenty of start-ups on their way of becoming worldwide companies that make trillions of dollars. His unique style as a mentor made him irreplaceable in the business. His passionate behaviors, blunt-talking and most importantly, not keeping a straight face while working were the aspects that made him "Ballsy" Bill Campbell.

One of the Apple executives Eddy Cue told that Campbell had given him an important lesson Campbell always had a strategy for problem-solving. In order to avoid the disruptions in the meetings beforehand, he used emotional actions, eliminated them and moved on to his meetings confidently. This method is called problem-focused coping in psychology. With this method, you save your energy for the main problem. So, when you have a meeting about the problems, firstly make sure to solve the problems that may arise in the meeting, then you can focus on the main problems in the business. It will make it better for everyone around.

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